

IN THE CLAIMS

1-13. (Canceled.)

14. (presently amended) A method of automatically inspecting a surface treatment on a game ball, which comprises the steps of:

providing an automated processing station comprising a surface treatment application apparatus, an automated inspection system, and a curing apparatus;
applying the surface treatment to the game ball within the processing station;
passing the game ball through ~~an~~ the automated inspection system within the processing station; and
determining conformance of the surface treatment to a predetermined standard;
curing said surface treatment upon determining conformance of the surface treatment to the predetermined standard.

15. (previously amended) The method of claim 14, wherein the step of determining conformance further comprises the step of:

generating an analysis signal indicative of whether the surface treatment conforms to the predetermined standard.

16. (previously amended) The method of claim 15, wherein the step of determining conformance further comprises the step of:

using the analysis signal to perform a further operation on the game ball.

17. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein the step using the analysis signal further comprises the step of:

transferring the game ball for further processing or rejecting the game ball depending on the analysis signal generated.

18. (previously amended) The method of claim 14, wherein the step of determining conformance further comprises the step of:

using at least one analysis algorithm to determine whether extraneous marks are present on the game ball, wherein the extraneous marks comprise

missing characters, ink smudges, ink smears, shadowing, missing sections of print, partial character thickness deviation, complete character thickness deviation, or misaligned characters; and
using the analysis algorithm to transfer the game ball for further processing or reject the game ball depending on the analysis signal generated.

19. (previously amended) The method of claim 14, wherein the step of applying a surface treatment on a game ball comprises the step of:
applying an agent to the surface of a game ball, wherein the agent is able to be illuminated under non-ambient lighting conditions.
20. (previously amended) The method of claim 19, wherein the step of passing the game ball through an automated inspection system further comprises the steps of:
illuminating the game ball;
detecting the illuminated agent with a machine vision system; and
comparing the illuminated agent to the predetermined standard with a machine vision engine.
21. (previously amended) The method of claim 20, wherein the step of illuminating the game ball further comprises the steps of:
providing a light source having a wavelength of about 300 nanometers to about 400 nanometers;
directing the light source at the game ball.
22. (previously amended) The method of claim 21, wherein the step of providing a light source further comprises:
providing an environmental modification device to eliminate dimple effects, wherein the dimple effects comprise glare, shading, or image distortion.
23. (previously amended) The method of claim 14, wherein the predetermined standard comprises a reference image of an acceptable surface treatment.
24. (presently amended) A method of automatically inspecting a coating on a game ball, which comprises the steps of:

providing an automated processing station comprising a coating application apparatus and an automated inspection system;
passing the game ball through an automated inspection system within the processing station; and
determining conformance of the coating to a predetermined standard.

25. (previously amended) The method of claim 24, wherein the step of determining conformance further comprises the step of:
generating an analysis signal indicative of whether the coating conforms to predetermined standards.
26. (previously amended) The method of claim 25, wherein the step of determining conformance further comprises the step of:
using the analysis signal to transfer the game ball for further processing or reject the game ball depending on the analysis signal generated.
27. (previously amended) The method of claim 24, wherein the step of applying a coating on a game ball comprises the step of:
mixing an agent with the coating, wherein the agent is able to be illuminated under non-ambient lighting conditions.
28. (previously amended) The method of claim 24, wherein the step of passing the game ball through an automated inspection system further comprises the steps of:
illuminating the game ball;
detecting the illuminated agent with a machine vision system; and
comparing the illuminated agent to a predetermined standard with a machine vision engine.
29. (previously amended) The method of claim 28, wherein the step of illuminating the game ball further comprises the steps of:
providing a light source having a wavelength of about 300 nanometers to about 400 nanometers; and
directing the light source at the game ball.

30. (previously amended) The method of claim 24, wherein the predetermined standard comprises a reference image of an acceptable coating.
31. (previously amended) A method of automatically inspecting an indicia on a game ball, which comprises the steps of:
 - applying the indicia to the game ball;
 - passing the game ball through an automated inspection system; and
 - determining conformance of the indicia to a predetermined standard.
32. (previously amended) The method of claim 31, wherein the step of applying the indicia to the game ball comprises the steps of:
 - combining at least one ink with at least one agent to obtain a mixture, wherein the agent is able to be illuminated under non-ambient lighting conditions;
 - and
 - applying the mixture to the game ball.
33. (previously amended) The method of claim 31, wherein the step of passing the golf ball through an automated inspection system further comprises the steps of:
 - illuminating the game ball;
 - detecting the illuminated agent with a machine vision system; and
 - comparing the illuminated agent to the predetermined standard with a machine vision engine.
34. (previously amended) The method of claim 31, wherein the step of determining conformance further comprises the steps of:
 - generating an analysis signal indicative of whether the indicia conforms to the predetermined standard; and
 - using the analysis signal to transfer the game ball for further processing or reject the game ball depending on the analysis signal generated.
35. (previously amended) The method of claim 33, wherein the step of illuminating the game ball further comprises the steps of:
 - providing a light source having a wavelength of about 300 nanometers to about 400 nanometers; and

directing the light source at the game ball.

36. (previously amended) The method of claim 31, wherein the predetermined standard comprises a reference image of an acceptable indicia.
37. (previously amended) A method of automatically inspecting a logo print on a game ball, which comprises the steps of:
 - applying the logo print to the game ball;
 - passing the game ball through an automated inspection system; and
 - determining conformance of the logo print to a predetermined standard.
38. (previously amended) The method of claim 37, wherein the step of applying a logo print to the game ball further comprises the steps of:
 - preparing a mixture of at least one ink and at least one agent, wherein the agent illuminates upon application of a light source; and
 - applying the mixture to at least a portion of the game ball.
39. (previously amended) The method of claim 38, wherein the step of passing the game ball through an automated inspection system further comprises the steps of:
 - illuminating the game ball;
 - detecting the illuminated agent with a machine vision system; and
 - comparing the illuminated agent to the predetermined standard with a machine vision engine.
40. (previously amended) The method of claim 39, wherein the step of illuminating the game ball further comprises the steps of:
 - providing a light source having a wavelength of about 300 nanometers to about 400 nanometers; and
 - directing the light source at the game ball.
41. (previously amended) The method of claim 40, wherein the step of providing a light source further comprises:
 - providing an environmental modification device to eliminate dimple effects, wherein the dimple effects comprise glare, shading, or image distortion.

42. (previously amended) The method of claim 37, wherein the step of determining conformance further comprises the steps of:
 - generating an analysis signal indicative of whether the logo print conforms to the predetermined standard; and
 - using the analysis signal to transfer the game ball for further processing or reject the game ball depending on the analysis signal generated.
43. (previously amended) The method of claim 37, wherein the step of determining conformance further comprises the step of:
 - using at least one analysis algorithm to determine whether extraneous marks are present on the game ball, wherein the extraneous marks comprise missing characters, ink smudges, ink smears, shadowing, missing sections of print, partial character thickness deviation, complete character thickness deviation, or misaligned characters; and
 - using the analysis algorithm to transfer the game ball for further processing or reject the game ball depending on the analysis signal generated.
44. (previously amended) The method of claim 37, wherein the predetermined standard comprises a reference image of an acceptable logo.
45. (New) The method of claim 31, wherein said indicia comprises a ball number, a ball brand name, or a company name.